



HALEY BARBOUR
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CONTACT: Office of the Governor
Pete Smith (601) 359-3150 or (601) 720-8733
Courtney Olivier (601) 576-2020

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GOVERNOR BARBOUR ANNOUNCES 186th ARW SELECTED FOR AIR FORCE PROJECT

*Mississippi Air National Guard Wing to conduct aircraft safety
modification project*

(Jackson, Mississippi)—Governor Haley Barbour today announced the Mississippi Air National Guard's 186th Air Refueling Wing (ARW) has been selected by the U.S. Air Force to conduct an aircraft safety modification project on the KC-135 Stratotanker Fleet.

Contracted through Boeing Aerospace and performed at Meridian's Key Field Air National Guard Base, the project will begin on August 23, 2006, and continue through January 2010, adding 20 full-time Boeing contract jobs and 12 full-time military positions. These additions will boost the current \$47 million annual payroll of the 186th ARW by approximately \$2 million.



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"While last year's decisions on base closures and realignments were disappointing, my staff, our congressional delegation, and the Adjutant General have worked diligently toward securing additional missions, including a follow-on flying mission, for the Meridian Air Guard," Governor Barbour said. "The early successes of these efforts are apparent and assure us that the very talented and dedicated men and women of the 186th will continue to have the opportunity to serve our country and state with the latest state of the art equipment and front line missions for many decades to come. We are proud of these airmen and the support they receive from their community."

The aircraft modifications will involve the installation and functional checking of a safety mechanism to each aircraft's flight control system. The unit will modify 146 aircraft, or about one third of the Air Force KC-135 fleet, during the contract period. Each aircraft will require about 30 days for modification.



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The 186th ARW was selected for the project because of excellent facilities and a readily available skilled work force in the area. Work will be completed using existing facilities, aircraft parking space and maintenance hangars, and will provide the wing another opportunity to highlight its readiness, reliability, and relevance to our nation's defense.

"The 186th has a reputation for excellence in personnel and facilities, and I am pleased the Air Force recognized this in selecting the unit for this project," U.S. Rep. Chip Pickering, R-Miss., said. "We will continue seeking new projects and missions for Key Field and all of our Mississippi bases to enhance our service to the armed forces and provide new and better jobs for Mississippi."

The 186th was recently awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in recognition of its excellence. The unit was also singled out by the Air Force for additional mission opportunities under the Total Force Initiative Program which will include a 150-person war



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fighting headquarters and a 250-person Red Horse engineering squadron. In addition, negotiations continue for a follow-on flying mission for the 153rd flying squadron after 2011, including but not limited to missions such as the projected joint cargo aircraft, KC-135 remote training, and C-17 strategic airlift.

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